

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION
TO REPEAL THE SELECTIVE
SERVICE ACT AND RELATED
PARTS OF THE UNITED STATES
CODE

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I am today introducing legislation to repeal the Selective Service Act and related parts of the United States Code. The Department of Defense, in response to calls to reinstate the draft, has confirmed that conscription serves no military need.

In his December confirmation hearings, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates stated his opposition to a military draft. Secretary Gates' immediate predecessor, Donald Rumsfeld, also publicly opposed reinstating the draft. The opposition of the two most recent Defense Secretaries is only the most recent confirmation that the draft serves no military purpose.

Obviously, if there is no military need for the draft, then there is no need for Selective Service registration. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, Selective Service registration is an outdated and outmoded system, which has been made obsolete by technological advances.

In fact, in 1993, the Department of Defense issued a report stating that registration could be stopped "with no effect on military mobilization and no measurable effect on the time it would take to mobilize, and no measurable effect on military recruitment." Yet the American taxpayer has been forced to spend over \$500 million dollars on an outdated system "with no measurable effect on military mobilization!"

Shutting down Selective Service will give taxpayers a break without adversely affecting military efforts. Shutting down Selective Service will also end a program that violates the very principals of individual liberty our Nation was founded upon. The moral case against the draft was eloquently expressed by former President Ronald Reagan in the publication *Human Events* in 1979: "... it [conscription] rests on the assumption that your kids belong to the state. If we buy that assumption then it is for the state—not for parents, the community, the religious institutions or teachers—to decide who shall have what values and who shall do what work, when, where and how in our society. That assumption isn't a new one. The Nazis thought it was a great idea."

I hope all my colleagues join me in working to shut down this un-American relic of a bygone era and help realize the financial savings and the gains to individual liberties that can be achieved by ending Selective Service registration.

LEE'S SUMMIT JOURNAL

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize the Lee's Summit Journal in Lee's Summit, Missouri. This newspaper will be celebrating its 125th anniversary of publica-

tion this month. Over the past 125 years, this newspaper has provided valuable services to its readers in their local communities.

As a staple of the community for all these years, the newspaper went through growth and expansion along with the community it serves. From its humble beginnings of being a 4-page paper, to its current publication schedule of twice a week, this newspaper has been and continues to be a stabilizing force within the community.

Since its inception in 1887, the Lee's Summit Journal provided quality news coverage for its reading community. Even through tough times, such as a fire which destroyed the newspaper office, the Lee's Summit Journal continued to deliver quality and reliable news service to the community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in recognizing the Lee's Summit Journal. The services the outstanding staff of the Lee's Summit Journal have provided over these 125 years have been an essential part of the community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLIE NORWOOD

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Mr. NORWOOD. Madam Speaker, on roll-call No. 16, on Motion to Table the Appeal of the Ruling of the Chair (H.R. 2), had I been present, I would have voted "no."

INTRODUCTION OF THE PRESER-
VATION OF RECORDS OF SER-
VITUDE, EMANCIPATION, AND
POST-CIVIL WAR RECONSTRUC-
TION ACT

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to reintroduce H.R. 390, the Preservation of Records of Servitude, Emancipation, and Post-Civil War Reconstruction Act. This important legislation, which passed the Government Reform Committee unanimously last year, will ensure that African-Americans who want to trace their family's history in our country are not prevented from doing so because of inadequate preservation and access to the records.

Madam Speaker, as you are aware, for most Americans, researching their genealogical history involves searching through municipal birth, death, and marriage records—almost all of which have been properly archived as public historical documents. However, African-Americans in the United States face a unique challenge when conducting genealogical research due to our Nation's history of slavery and discrimination. Instead of looking up wills, land deeds, birth and death certificates, or other traditional genealogical research documents, African-Americans must often try to identify the name of former slave owners, hoping that the owners kept records of pertinent information, such as births and deaths.

To compound this difficulty, African-American genealogists find that most current records of servitude, emancipation, and post-Civil War reconstruction are frequently inaccessible, poorly catalogued, and inadequately preserved from decay. While some states and localities have undertaken efforts to collect these documents with varying degrees of success, there has not been any national effort to preserve these pieces of public and personal history to make them readily and easily accessible to all Americans.

Madam Speaker, in 2000, both the House and Senate unanimously passed the Freedmen's Bureau Records Preservation Act, which became Public Law 106-444, and required the Archivist of the United States to create a searchable indexing system to catalogue the genealogical records from the post-Civil War Reconstruction period. This law was the first step towards ensuring that many of these valuable and important records are appropriately accessible to genealogists and historians, and based on its success we now recognize the need to expand the scope of the original law or risk losing other critically important historic documents.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 390, the Preservation of Records of Servitude, Emancipation, and Post-Civil War Reconstruction Act, tackles the problems of poorly catalogued and inadequately preserved records in two ways. First, it will make sure that records of servitude, emancipation, and post-Civil War reconstruction currently being stored within the various agencies of the federal government will be properly preserved. This will protect a vast amount of genealogical information, including records from the Southern Claims Commission Records, the Records of the Freedmen's Bank, the Slave Impressments Records, and even Slave Payroll Records and Slave Manifests. By providing the Archivist of the United States with the resources necessary to preserve, maintain and electronically catalogue these important records we can eliminate many of the barriers that African-Americans encounter when trying to engage in a proper genealogy search. However, since many of these records are disbursed around the country in non-federal depositories, this legislation would also authorize the National Archives to distribute grants to the States, academic institutions, and genealogical associations in order to preserve and establish online databases of these important local records of servitude, emancipation, and post-Civil War reconstruction. These grants will ensure that families doing research in my home State of California or anywhere in the country will access to these treasure troves of genealogical information without having to leave the comforts of their computer chair.

Madam Speaker, I am delighted to be joined by colleagues from both sides of the aisle who are original cosponsors of my legislation and particularly appreciate the support of my good friends and colleagues, TOM DAVIS, and ELIJAH CUMMINGS, whose assistance in drafting this bill has been monumental. I would urge the rest of our colleagues to support this legislation and hope that we will be voting on this bill soon.